The poor mans progresse and rest,
Or, the way of God with man
passing through the
wildernesse to

CANAAN.

In answer to a grand question demanded of
the Author whilst a prisoner in Lincolne.

Wherein the ordinary of God dealing with man in the
severall stages of grace, he leadeth through sundry
to the possession of his promises. Directed to the
Congregation
Published for the prevention of Evill Suggestions
against the said prisoner during his captivity.
Wherein is briefly demonstrated
Firstly, the falsehood of that many teach in the generation
of sinne.
Secondly, what the true translation is of the 1. Epistle
Iohn 3. 9. and reason of the contrary.
Thirdly, The infallibility of the true faith of grace.
Fourthly, The difference betweene Iesus Christ and Satan by him.
Fifthly, what God gives to men absolutely, and what upon condi-
tion of repentance.
Sixthly, The ability that God gives and man may therefrom
work.
Seventhly, The extent of Christs enlightening grace, and also how the
soul ceases to be capable to grace.
Eighthly, Wherein soul-Lapse stands fast and sure in the promises.
Ninthly, Some Reasons in brief for opening the causes in what
Tenthly, Some motives to induce submission to the Will of God by
all meanes given by Scripture and our experience.

By WILLIAM BRYDGE,
A poor distressed Servant of Jesus Christ
prisoner at Lincolne.

Rev. 3. 10. To the Law and to the Testimony, If they speak not ac-
cording to this word, it is because there is no light in them.
Printed for the Author. 1649.

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To the Reader.

The reason why I present this following Epistle to your view, is partly from a sensibility of my undergoing the censures of some in reference to my late captivity, and partly from the consideration of the ignorance of many thousands of the true foundation, and the better enmity of others, by reason of which mens hearts are stuft with divisions without profits in things of greatest concernment, and supposing this small Epistle might be advantagious to the settleing the thoughts of some that yet remain unstable, and the particulars in it, may as well be profitable to thee as to me, being witnessed (in me) by the eternall light, and confirmed both by Scripture and reason, I judged it my duty not to keep it secret, especially being so eminently called to the work it self: Now that which I only crave of thee, is to read it with deliberation and without prejudice with the noble Bereans search the Scripture whether those things be so, and if I speak not according to that word, if it be a contrary doctrine, receive it not, but if agreeable, then despise it not, because of the unworthinesse of the instrument, and for what good thou gainest give God the glory, which is all present from the unworthiest of the Lords servants, and thine for Christs sake,

William Pryer.

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Honoured Sir.

HEaring that something had been suggested to your honour as to my judgement and practise, from the consideration of the appearances of old light in you, I was engaged to give in this epitomie, humbly craving your favourable construction, and judgement, as you find it consonant with truth, I dare not say my former trading in those several formes, that I manifested to your honour I had been in, was not the products of divine light, for Gods way of manifestation is by degrees, and he brings his people through the wildernesse of tryalls and temptations to *Canaan*, yea many times through by wales, that so their experience may cause them to break forth into admiration, at his wonder bringing them through the belly of hell &c. I shall therefore God willing manifest to your honour, the manner of Gods dealing with me, more particularly in every form.

My manner of education in my youth I believe was not unknown to you, which was after the strictest manner of the then times, with those commonly called puritans, whose word was then to me, as the prophet speakes, as a very lovely song, which begat in me a desire to teach, and to know the way that the Lord hath excorpted; which I was ignorant of, and in my enquiring, I had then presented that the holy spirit was the evidence of that way; But when by a particular application, I came to enquire whether I had this evidence yea or no, and what was the tokens of it; it was presented unto me by some that desire to pray, and to be instant therein, and to refrain from bad company and vices, was certain tokens of it; and then I rested satisfied in such actions done, and as my qualifications ebb'd and flow'd, so my comforts eb'd and flow'd, and

when clouded by sins, I immediately questioned my condition, ruminating upon a text that the foundation of God stands sure, by which I was brought to conclude that I was not upon that foundation, but upon my own righteousnesse, which was filthy rags, because so wanting, which cast me into a sad condition, to know the true foundation I desired; But to pray for it I was averse, yet frequent in reasoning according to my weak abilities, and desirous to reason with all that seemed any whit religious, amongst whom I received as I thought some glimps of comfort for a time, from that of the Apostle, viz. by this we know that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren, when I was confident I loved, which bore me untill I began to consider, who they were in whom the Apostle concludes that knowledge of translation, and who the brethren were, and then could easily conclude that I had not in my condition one dram of interest in that text, not knowing by an infallible testimony the brethren, nor my self qualified as the parties speaking, and so by some instruments, was carried to a text in *John, he that believeth shall be saved*, If I believed it was a certain testimony, this I laid hold of untill my God was pleased to cast me upon the serious consideration of that wonderfull place of *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. For other foundations can no man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ, and if any man build upon that foundation, *&c.* from whence through goodnesse I came seriously to reason thus, If I must build upon Christ only, then my building upon my own believeings, was matter for the fire, for the day of tryall would declare it, which put me upon a serious consideration, what was the true way of building upon Christ, to petition the Father for the discovery of it, I trust not, though fearnestly thirsted after it, for I could not with confidence call God Father, whilst contemplating upon this, my God was pleased to let me hear, that still voice of his, directing me the way in generall, that the only way of building upon Christ, was to build upon his words, which must judge us at the last day, which set my cogitations on work, what scripture told me I was of that number for whom Christ died, it was presented to me that he died for sinners, and I was

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one, and in confirmation. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. was alledged, *that Christ came into the world to save sinners*, but then reasoning with some that he came to save some sinners not all, considering which I was at as great a losse as before, not knowing by an infallible testimony that I was of that number for whom Christ died, which led me to a universall proposition for comfort, which I was altogether averse to, it being so contrary to that I had been taught, and especially considering two texts of scripture, the one the 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. that the holy scripture is able to make wise to salvation through believing, and is so profitable, that the man of God may be perfect throughly furnished, &c. the other the 1 *Thes.* 4. 5. That the gospel comes with much assurance, which necessarily must be from the word of God, and not from the wisdome of man, which induc'd me through grace to lay hold on the generall doctrine, especially considering the ill consequences of the particular doctrine then presented unto me. As

First, If Christ hath not died for all then thus, no gospel for some men, contrary to *Luke* 2. 10. *Isai.* 49. 6. *Jud.* 3.

Secondly, then infidelity is not the condemning sin contrary to *Mark.* 16. 16. *John* 3. 18, 19.

Thirdly, then the servants of the Lord are commanded to preach lies to some men, *Mark* 16. 15. 1 *Tim.* 2. 7. in being commanded to declare Christs death for all, when it were but for some. see 1 *Tim.* 4. 10, 11.

Fourthly, Then the Apostles did not speak truth, when they said, God would have all men to be saved. 1. *Tim.* 2. 4. and for that end ordered remission of sins to be preacht, *Luke* 24. 47. *Act.* 10. 36. *Act.* 13. 38. That Christ took away the sins of the world, *Joh.* 1. 29. that he tasted death for every man, *Heb.* 2. 9. that he is the saviour of all men, 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. that he gave himself a ransome for all. 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. that he bought false prophets and false teachers, that bring in damnable heresies, and upon themselves destruction, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. that he sanctified those that trample under foot the son of God, and count the bloud of the covenant an unholy thing, all which scriptures must be raised out of the book of God, and counted as fables if Christ hath not died for all men.

Fifthly, If he died not for all men, then his rendering vengeance in flaming fire at the great and dreadfull day, shall not be, for not believing the gospel, but because there was none for them to believe, contrary to 2 *Thes.* 1. 8.

Sixthly, If he died not for all men then it's no sin, but a virtue, for some men not to believe it, because if they should believe that he died for them, when he did not, they would believe a lye.

Seventhly, To deny Christs death for all men, is to call in question Christs own words, *Rev.* 22. 17. in his generall inviting poor lost man.

The serious consideration of those absurdities, with many others presented to me, clearly following a limited gospel, and knowing assuredly, that no absurdities followed upon the truth, I through the goodnesse of my dear Lord closed with that despised doctrine of his, despised indeed of men, but chosen of himself, that the riches of his love and goodnesse might be manifested without respect of persons, in which my heart was presently established, having his word to testifie to my conscience, then my building was upon him the rock, against which I am sure no storms nor floods can prevail, if I make use of those sweet givings forth of himself, in holding fast my confidence firm to the end, for I have not the reasonings of men, nor no inherent qualifications, but his own word, in and from which I have a cloud of witnesses, of his dying for me, in that he dyed for all men, and his end therein declared. 2 *Cor.* 5. 15. that he died for all, that those which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again. And this is the condemnation under the gosel, not because Christ hath not died for man, nor because man doth not live by Christ, but because man doth not live to Christ, there is this difference betwixt living by Christ, and living to him; all men live by Christ, for by him all things consist, *Col.* 1. 17. yet none live to him, but such as are alive in their obedience, and such only he accounts his friends. *Joh.* 15. 14. and promiseth his presence. *Joh.* 14. 21. and his and the Fathers abode. *Joh.* 14. 23. to such he promiseth further discoveries of himself and makes known whatsoever the Father hath made

known unto him, *Joh.* 15. 15. the making forth of which love I have in some measure enjoyed, and if I had been more obedient, I believe I should have enjoyed more; yet not for my obedience, but because God hath promised who hath said, *I will do this for the house of* Israel, yet not for your sakes, yet will I be sought unto by you, and hath also promised, that he that will do my will shall know my doctrine; yet not as a recompence for his doing, God hath no more said he will save any people for doing, then he hath said he will save them without doings, for he himself will have all the glory of mans salvation, and of mans doing, because God himself finds all the matter, he is the authour of our salvation, and the authour of our abilities by which we do, it is he that gives us in the behalf of Christ, not only to enable us to believe, but also to suffer for his sake, which promise of abilities no man can claim that suffers as an evill doer, though many times he is neerer then his promise, which through the riches of his grace, I have had experience of, by which grace I have obtained an assurance of mercy, who am least in all my Fathers house, not worthy of the crumbs that fall from his table, much lesse of those sweet smiles from himself, speaking peace to my poor soul, sweetning all conditions unto me, with freenes of satisfaction in all sufferings, though I have been a backslider, and thereby have occasioned the way of truth to be evill spoken of, and brought the people of God under shame and reproach, yet have obtained mercy, though I was with *Asaph*, envious at the prosperity of the wicked, seeing no bands in their death, but had more then heart could wish, though the righteous wanted, and were troubled every morning, I concluded I had changed my heart in vain, thus was my temptations, yet from those the Lord hath delivered me, by revealing his Son in me, and by him discovering to me, as to the prophet, *Psal.* 73. 17, 18. both the end of the righteous and the wicked, and now through the eternall light guiding me in that which some call heresie, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things recorded in the law, & the prophets, in which are the reasons of my believing.

First, That Christ took upon him the iniquity of all that went

were astray, *Isai.* 53. 6. *Rom.* 3. 23, 24. which was the first doctrine that *Peter* preacht, *Act.* 10. 34, 35, 36. and that *Paul* and *Barnabas* preacht, *Act.* 13. 47. 1 Cor. 15. 3. The Apostle when he came to the *Corinthians*, which were Idolaters, he did not tell them Christ died for an elect number, and if they were of that number, Christ died for them, but he tells them first of all that Christ died for them.

Secondly, I find this Christ appointed by the Father, for a light to the world, to the Gentiles, to them that sit in darkness.

Thirdly, I find that he doth enlighten every man that comes into the world, *Joh.* 1. 9. he that denies that Christ enlightens every man, doth in effect deny Christ to be the true light, as compared with verse the 8. besides every mans experience in this particular, there no man that sins but immediately after, if not at present, he hath a kind of secret cincture in his breast, telling him what he ought not to do or have done which discovers that the light hath been there.

The next particular considerable is what this light hath taught me, First, What God is in himself, Secondly, what he is in the manifestations of himself.

First, That he is infinite in himself which is considerable, in the unsearcheableness of his wisdom and way, The manifestations of himself are clearly seen, by the things that are made, that they could not be without a beginner, that this beginner is wise, in his orderly placing things, and powerfull, which is manifested by thunder, and lightening, and dreadfull appearances of that nature, besides altering and changing, throwing down and setting up, beyond the reach of reason, even to admiration, and that he is loving in causing the rain to fall, and the sun to shine, and fruitfull seasons, filling mans heart with joy and gladness, the consideration of this infiniteness discovered in his works, demonstrates to poor creatures, their own nothingness, which begets in them a holy reverence of the majesty of God, from the sight of his fulness seriously considered, carries the soul to a consideration of its own wants, and of what God hath promised, comparing which promises,

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(viz.) what he hath manifested begetts a confidence that this infinite God is faithfull, which puts a poor soul into a capacity to pray, without which no man can do without sin, and to lay stedfast hold on the promises of love, of life, of liberty, of priviledges, of mutuall relation, of divine communion; all which are manifested in the promises of the Father of mercies, and God of all Consolation.

Of love, in giving his Son, and by him manifesting an open door into the holyest.

Of life, to those that go in by that door opened.

Of liberty, of walking into that new and living way, into the holiest.

Of priviledges, of knowing their being freed from the hand-writing of ordinances that were against them who walk in that way opened, and of having God with them, Christ with them, abiding with them: *Joh.* 14. 23. Simpathizing with them in sufferings, and comforting them by the Angel of his presence, revealing the mind of the Father to them, opening living fountains of water, with a manifestation of liberty to draw with joy, out of the wells of salvation, which makes the faithfull of the Lord joyfull above their fellowes, wiser then the Rabies of the world, though fools for Christs sake, yet instruments of salvation to them that believe, see the freenes of those living fountains bears up their heads above all troubles and fears, causing them to mount up like eagles, to run and not be weary, to labour and not faint.

Of mutuall relation, having God for their Father by promise, and Christ our elder brother.

And of divine communion, in enjoying fellowship with the Father, and the Son Jesus Christ, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. which all men may enjoy, that in love receive what is declared of and by those divine beings, the consideration of these promises in which are contain'd those divine manifestations, leads poor souls to a clear sight of the conditions, upon which these graces promised are intended.

His love, in giving his Son; and manifesting through him a door of life opened is absolute, his manifestation of liberty, of priviledge, of mutuall relation, of divine com-

munion, all upon conditions of obedience of universall obedience, for such only know Christ that so obey him, 1 *Joh.* 2. 4. And such only love him, that yield a universall obedience to him, *Joh.* 14. 21, 23. and such only he accounts his friends *Joh.* 15. 14. this begets a serious consideration what Christ hath commanded, which carries us to the counsell of God for direction, and as we desire to manifest love to God, and to the Son Jesus Christ, who hath loved us, if God requires us to speak often one to another, we ought not to neglect it, and if God gives us the spirit of discerning thereupon, as he promises between the righteous and the wicked, *Mal.* the 3. 18. then in duty we ought to praise him, and if God requires us to separate from those that are not his people, and to joyn with those that are his people, in whom God dwells, *Isa.* 57. 11. 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. then we ought not to neglect it, and if God manifests himself a Father thereupon, as he promises, still we ought to sound forth his praise, which is our reasonable service, and if God manifests unto us, that baptisme of believers justifies him, and the refecters of it, rejects Gods counsell against themselves, *Luk.* 7. 29. 30. who can forbid water that they should not be baptized, *Act.* 10. 48. and so likewise for walking in all the ordinances of the Lord, with reference and godly fear, we ought with comfort and confidence make our request known unto God, who is the comfort of poor despised creatures, is in heaven, and sees all the actions of men, from whose presence there is nothing hid, not a hair of the head of any of his people falls to the ground without his providence, their sufferings and the reason of their sufferings, whether for righteousnesse sake, or as evill doers, and to the comfort of the righteous will ere long make all naked, when the Son is manifested and acknowledged, for he the only potentate the king of kings, and lord of lords, who only hath mortality, dwelling in the light, where no mortall eyes can approach, whom God will send to refresh his people, at the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his prophets, since the world began, *Act.* 3. 19. 20, 21. which through grace fills me with inward comfort, though I bestript of

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all outward enjoyments, yet I have an assurance of an eternall inheritance, which the world can neither give, nor take away, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at his appearing, when his poor despised ones shall be made full and compleat participators of what the Lord hath promised by his servants the prophets and Apostles, by whose writings, the mystery hid from ages and generations is manifested in such legible characters, whereby when men read, they may understand. *Eph.* 3. 4. which comforts the hearts of the Lords servants, filling them with all riches, of assurance, of understanding, in their acknowledging the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, to the which acknowledgement, the God of praise, and love, bring all those that set their faces Sion ward, that in the rich enjoying of assurance, may finish their course with joy, he coming the earnest of their inheritance, untill the redemption of the purchased possession, when the righteous shall receive the end of their hope, the salvation of their souls. And so much in brief, I was solicited to signifie unto your honour, touching the manner of Gods dealing with my poor soul, now humbly craving your serious consideration of the particulars herein, being willing to receive information, wherein I see either in judgement or practise, and the God of peace, and love, give you understanding in all his wayes which are pleasanter then all that this world can afford.

I shall only give you an account in a word or two of my practice in oppoſing the Clergy, which I am sure you have had various reports of.

First, I never spake to any of them by way of question, untill they had done, except two: and what I said to those two, was in vindication of present ordinances, openly violated by them.

Nor I never laid hands upon any, nor abetted any that did, though I have heard so much hath been suggested, to your honour, but alwaies on the contrary, desired peace and peaceable reasoning, yet strongly endeavouring by reason to vindicate that which I apprehended to be truth.

The reasons of this my practise, may it please your honour was these.

First, I am commanded to follow the example of my dear Saviour, and the example of his servants, so far as they followed him, I find him disputing amongst the Doctours, and asking them questions, and taking his opportunities of speaking amongst multitudes, I find the servants, as *Stephen*, and *Apollo*, and *Silas*, and *Peter*, following his example, and it was *Pauls* manner, *Act.* 17. 2. to go into the Synogogues on the Sabbath day, and reason with them out of the Scripture, which God is my witnesse, besides many hundreds, I have practised with much meeknesse though I have received many taunts and reproaches from them, unbecoming men of their profession, besides sundry of their endeavours to set the tumultuous about my ears, as I am able to manifest, yet I rendered them not evill, though I have by their occasion often undergone stroakes, buffetings, and stoning, and my garments torn from me, all which I value not, because I know my God hath registred my sufferings, I gave no manner of unbefeeming retorts at *Oundle*, when Mr *Resbury* came into the publick place, and called to Mr *Morley*, a gentleman of *Northamptonshire*, whilst preaching (being then in the pulpit, which was at that time free by act of Parliament,) uttering with a loud voice contumelious threatnings uncomely to be mentioned by any that professe the name of Christ, but a patient suffering is comely to, and amongst the people of God an adorning to the gospell of their profession, to bear about alwayes in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, is their treasure in earthen vessels, and therefore shall commit these the series of my understanding and practise to your serious consideration, being willing through grace to go through good report and evill, and to suffer any thing that God may have the glory, and what of it deserves the light so let it have it: which is all at present from him who is the unworthiest of truths lovers, yet shall take leave to subscribe my self:

Your Honours servant
for the truths sake.

William Pryor.

I know I shall be the wonder of the Churches abroad, and of all others that have been witnesses to my opposing the doctrine of imposition of hands, when they hear of my entring into the practise of it, it may be some will censure me as unstable: be it so, I had rather be accounted unstable, then stable in opposing truth, and therefore shall briefly give to serious consideration the reasons of my submitting to imposition of hands, now practised in many places upon all baptized beleevers.

First, Because ever since I opposed it, I have found a coldnesse growing upon me as to the things of God.

Secondly, I have found a greater debility in my self to withstand temptations.

Thirdly, because I could find no other way to claim that great promise of the gift of the spirit, by which is convaid the assurance of all the other promises, but by following the example of the holy men of God in that which did immediately proceed the enjoyment of the spirit.

Fourthly, Because I find imposition of hands joyned to the doctrine of baptismes by a Conjunction copulative. *Heb.6.* and according to the practise of the Apostles, immediately to proceed the enjoyment of the promise intealed upon the chearfull reception of the doctrine of baptismes of water and afflictions.

Fifthly, I find it an interposed practise of the Apostles immediately after baptisme, before the saints enjoying the spirit promised.

Sixthly, Because mortification of sin guidance in the way of truth, helps to prophecy directions to prayer, all convai'd through the spirit which leads into all truth.

Seventhly, Though I find some had the spirit without it, yet I have no grounds to expect it but in Gods ordinary way of communication.

Eighthly, Because I find imposition of hands kept alive successively from the Apostle through the darkest mists of popery, even after baptisme was changed, as to the right subjects by the subtilty of *Fidus* the priest, this practise hath been ever since kept alive by the Bishops hands upon their couzened babes.

Ninthly, Because I find a greater experience of the in-

dwelling of God in those that practise it upon baptized believers, then in the opposers of it, more frequent in duties both at home and abroad, more love in them one towards another, more watchfull over one another, more zealous for truth, more sympathying one with another in sufferings. If I had no other reasons to convince me of truth in the present practise of imposition of hands then I have experienced in these latter. These only would have engaged me no longer to have opposed it.

Vale.

William Prior

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